

CHAPTER 2

AN OVERVIEW OF NORTHERN CHEYENNE CULTURE AND HISTORY

I. The Northern Cheyenne World View.

The Northern Cheyenne are the people of The Morning Star. They are the caretakers of the Sacred Buffalo Hat, a sacred covenant with *Maheo* (Creator) brought to the *Suhtio* people by one of their sacred medicine people *Ho'ev'nehsti* (Stands On The Earth) at *Toh'nihvoos* (Stone Hammer Mountain) near the Great Lakes in what is now known as the state of Minnesota. They are a kin people to the Southern Cheyenne of Oklahoma. The Southern Cheyenne are the caretakers of the Sacred Arrows, also a sacred covenant brought to the *Tse'tsehese'stahase* people by one of their sacred medicine people Sweet Medicine at Bear Butte in the Black Hills area of what is now known as the state of South Dakota. *Wohehiv* the Morning Star, is greeted as an ancient old man each morning by the Keepers of the Sacred Covenants. (J. Little Coyote, 3/3/02).

Cheyenne cosmology and worldview have been described by Powell (1969), Campbell (1986), Moore (1974, 1979, 1984, 1986), Deaver and Tallbull (1988), Grinnell (1972) and Hoebel (1960). However, the following description of the Cheyenne cosmology and worldview is unique in that it was written by Joe Little Coyote, a member of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe.

The cultural life of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe is holistic in nature, i.e., the elements of their economy, history, religion, language, sacred belongings, their health and medicine, education, livelihood, their allodial existence with its cultural imperatives in maintaining the environmental and cultural integrity of its land and water in particular, their customs and traditions, their music and arts cannot be separated from the rest of the elements that make up the culture. Although each particular element can be analyzed, all elements are interrelated and must be addressed in that context if the cultural concerns of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe are to be adequately addressed.

The Northern Cheyenne Reservation, near the frontier town of Ashland, in the state of Montana, was created by Executive Order in 1884, is the homeland of the Northern Cheyenne people. In spite of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe having allodial title to these lands, this homeland was won at great cost. Many of their ancestors were subjected to outright physical extermination and cultural genocide designed to wipe them off the face of the earth. This human holocaust had to be stopped due to a great outcry from the American public against these inhumane atrocities, and because these genocidal practices were becoming too much of a strain on the financial resources of the country. As an alternative, the federal government placed the Northern Cheyenne people into confinement status on the Tongue River Reservation in southeastern Montana Territory.

The Northern Cheyenne are an aboriginal people indigenous to the North American continent, specifically comprising a culture based on the integrated traditions, customs and beliefs of the *Tsi'sti'stas* and the *Suhtio*, who today constitute the Northern Cheyenne Nation.

Tsi'sti'stas means: "like hearted people (Ruby Sooktis, 1984)," who were given birth as a nation at their sacred mountain "*Nowah'voos* (Bear Butte)," near Sturgis, SD., where they were given their Sacred Covenant.

Suhtio, which is a shortened version of "*Issih'omih'tio* (Henry & Julia Little Coyote, 1958)" meaning: "people of the marsh waters that flow into the dark brushy country," who were given birth as a nation at their sacred mountain "*Toh'nih'voos* (Stone Hammer Mountain)," near the Great Lakes in Minnesota, where they were given the Sacred Buffalo Hat Covenant.

These two people – *Tsi'sti'stas* and *Suhtio* – are a kindred people having slightly dissimilar languages, beliefs and traditions and customs, but are now integrated in their religious ceremonial expressions and present way of life. The cultural standard of the *Tsi'sti'stas* is based on their Covenant the "Sacred Arrow Lodge," and the cultural standard of the *Suhtio* is based on their Covenant the "Sacred Buffalo Hat lodge." Both these Covenants are not unlike the "Ark of the Covenant" of the Hebrew people of the Old Testament in the Bible. Today, after a period of amalgamation, both these traditions became integrated into one cultural expression of the Northern Cheyenne Nation.

With these two Covenants the Cheyenne had power from Grandmother Earth to obtain their food, shelter and clothing as well as the power of defense against their enemies. In times when there was a threat to the nation, the buffalo shield was hung from the tipi poles for protective purposes. This was called: *Hova'noh'nistosti*. This cultural practice is still continued to this day. In addition, the sacred ceremonials associated with these Covenants contain instructions regarding their creation, origins, history, cosmology, their sacred language, traditions, customs, beliefs and values which reflect principles of love and respect for one another, not to be wasteful, not to be abusive toward life in general, not to marry into one's family or extended family, not to murder another Cheyenne, to be respectful toward one another and to share with one another, to respect and care for the children and elderly, not to steal from one another, and for the leadership to care for and protect the people first. Their system of sanctions regarding violations of these principles were rehabilitative rather than punitive, other than banishment for murder.

The Sacred Buffalo Hat Covenant is still with the Northern Cheyenne today and continues to provide a tangible reference of who they are as a people. To some extent the ways of this Covenant are evolving in carrying forward their original identity to give purpose and meaning to the younger generations for today's times and conditions. It is good and proper that the Northern Cheyenne people still live with their Covenant in the old time way to "preserve their identity as a nation of people" for future generations to come. In these sacred ways the ceremonial people believe that the Cheyenne people will never disappear from these lands, with the assurance that the Tribe will in perpetuity

remain an aboriginal sovereign Northern Cheyenne Nation indigenous to the North American continent.

And so today, this Covenant is still very much with the Northern Cheyenne people and continues to be cared for in the traditional way of the tipi lodge of ancient times. The Northern Cheyenne are situated in the southeastern part of Montana, specifically in the Tongue River Valley region. Each and every morning the Keeper of the Sacred Buffalo Hat Covenant takes a stick of wood and knocks on one of the tipi door poles to signal to the people the beginning of a new day. He enters the tipi, a fire of dry cottonwood is made and a sacred pipe and tobacco are used to make prayer offerings for the well being of the people. This occurs every morning when the morning star appears and again in the evening as the evening star appears. In beginning the new day in prayer, in metaphysically relating to the morning star, he greets this star as an ancient old man, calling him grandfather (*Heh'nuhm'shim*)!

Today, in continuing traditional cultural protocol, many Cheyenne people when preparing to go on an extended trip outside of their homelands, stop by the Sacred Buffalo Hat Keeper's home where the Covenant is kept and cared for, bringing gifts of tobacco and dry goods. They inform him that they are going to be gone for a period of time. In this way the Keeper will keep them in mind in his prayers – asking for a safe trip and return. In addition, people go the Keeper for prayers for their special needs, e.g., health and well being of the family. Special protective prayer ceremonies are held for young men and women who are leaving to serve in the Armed Forces of the United States, and are given special protective amulets to wear while in service. In addition, these protocols also continue to be used to provide a “cultural sanction” for positions taken by Tribal leaders having to do with the Tribe as a whole. It is the belief that if these protocols are used, whatever direction these leaders hold out for the future of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe will be beneficially effective for all the people.

Although the contemporary Cheyenne understand scientific theories of the elemental makeup of the universe and the earth as being inanimate, this in no way diminishes their continuing metaphysical practices which relate to the physical elements of the universe as being animate with spiritual qualities. The basis of this Cheyenne understanding is in their belief systems as expressed in their sacred ways, which maintains a spiritual connection to *Maheo* as the sacred creative essences that caused the creation of the universe and of life itself. They believe that the white man has become psychically disassociated from these original understandings of humankind. Nothing seems to be sacred to the white man anymore in that his spiritual/metaphysical understanding is now grounded in temporal considerations of his physical environment with no real sense of care to maintain its life essences to maintain his own existence, and that this comes at a time when the pollution caused by the unwise use of industrial technology is beginning to have a noticeable destructive effect on the natural essences which sustain all life.

The Cheyenne also understand that if they are not diligent in exercising due care in modifying these elemental arrangements of creation there is a real potential for upsetting the elemental balances within the environmental systems in which these life elements are sustained. In these regards, the cultural practices of the Cheyenne are

geared to use only that which is needed to provide basic sustenance for their health and general well being, leaving the rest to replenish Grandmother Earth in providing sustenance to all other life beings in a manner that does not upset the environmental balances which sustain all life.

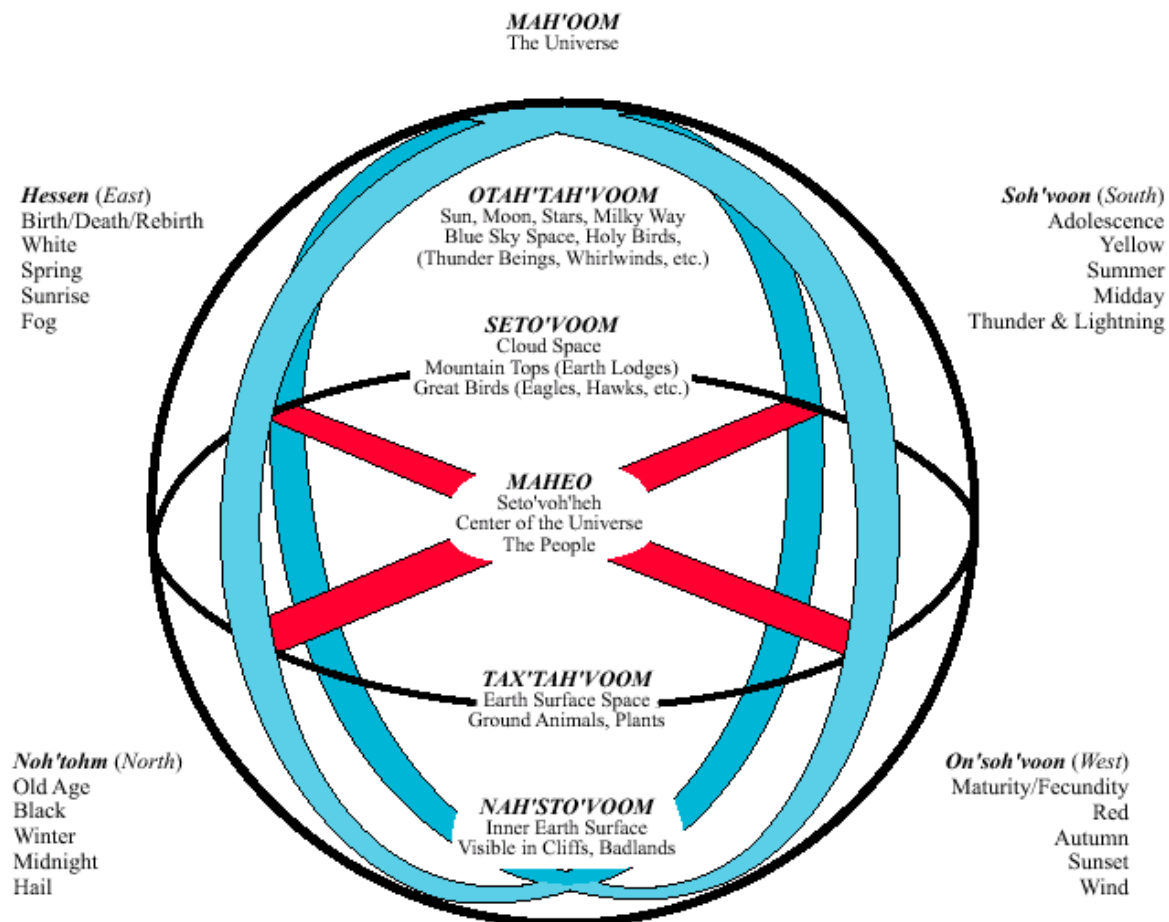
In part, the medicine ways of the Cheyenne were adapted to be responsive to the harsh realities of living a subsistence way of life in following the great buffalo herds and to the dangers associated with it as they moved through territories inhabited by other peoples. In being mindfully attuned to the natural rhythms of the universe in the movement of star formations, through their sacred ways they were able to use the morning star as it appeared to their advantage in a manner of providing for their well being. So, it was for security reasons and to their advantage to be up and moving early. The Cheyenne have a saying that: “we are just moving through, don’t tarry long.”

Today, in these prayer offerings, the leaders of the United States of America are included (as well as other nations of the world) as it is acknowledged that not only is the destiny of the Northern Cheyenne People caught up in the destiny of the United States, but also that the health of Grandmother Earth is dependent on understanding and peace among all the nations of the world. (Austin Two Moon, 1971, Sacred Arrow Renewal Ceremony, along the Tongue River near the town of Ashland, MT).

In spiritually relating to the elements of creation, sacred tobacco is offered to: *Maheo*, the sacred essence causing the creation of life itself, to continue to provide for the care required for the well being of all life everywhere; to the Sun as their Grandfather; to the Earth as their Grandmother; to the Moon as their Mother; to the Stars as their Brothers and Sisters; to the four cardinal directions as the Sacred Spirit Helpers who watch over their way of life; to all other creatures (plants, insects and animals) which serve as the food and medicine of their Grandmother for their health and sustenance; to the winged and the water beings, e.g., the rainbow colors of the shells of fish that reflect the beauty of all the creation of *Maheo*; and to the watery vapor of the Creator’s breath of life which is the essence and sustainer of all life. The Cheyenne can’t believe that anyone would allow the destruction of the very essence that keeps them and all of life alive, by not being mindful of what they are doing to harm the environment. In conceptual terms in relating to these modern times, all this can be translated into what is contemporarily called the “environment/eco-system.” Since ancient times in the growing awareness of the sacred creation, the Cheyenne people were told by their prophets of old, the sacred ancient ones, the grandfathers and grandmothers, never to abuse it lest they perish from the earth.

The Cheyenne believe that their physical and spiritual beings were created from these lands when they were given life by the Creator *Maheo*’s breath of life. This belief forms the basis of their cosmology and identity as an indigenous people of these North American earth lands.

The Cheyenne have a conceptual framework with which to understand their world outlook. The terms for the four vertical levels of the Cheyenne world view are: (1) the universe is *Mah'oom*, and (2) the blue sky space is *Otah'tah'v'oom*, and (3) the middle sky space containing clouds of water vapor is *Setov'oom*, and (4) the surface of the earth is *Tax'ta'v'oom*, and (5) the inner earth below is *Nah'sto'v'oom*. The "oom" of each of these levels refers to the "watery vapor of the Creator's breath of life" in creating the universe and all life. See Figure 2-1.



The renewable, cyclic universe, Mah'oom, is governed by spiritual essence in constant interaction. In adapting to various environments, the Cheyenne have developed sacred, spiritual ways based on the infinite rebirth of the universe. The spiritual earth symbols of the earth renewal ceremonies are formed like the spiral galaxies of the universe. In these ceremonies, the re-enactment of the creation of the universe by the human male and female includes all life beings and elements in the universe, thereby making it whole and in balance.

Diagram by Winfield Coleman, in collaboration with
Joe Little Coyote Sr., Northern Cheyenne

The Cheyenne are oriented to the eastern direction from which the sun rises, which is why they face the camp lodges of their nation to the east, and also face east when engaged in prayer. This is keeping in balance with the natural cosmological rhythms of the universe and the earth. To have a complete understanding of this horizontal outlook it can only be fully understood in the context of the Cheyenne's cyclic view of their universe in which the sun, beginning at its zenith in the Cheyenne new year during the spring season, goes in a circle from left to right ending in the dead of winter and then moving back to its zenith to begin yet another cycle:

- (1) The Eastern direction from which the sun (*Vo'ne'veshe*) rises is the direction from which they believe life comes. It is said a child about to be born is journeying from the east to be with the people. This direction is "*Hessen*" represented by "*Hessen'ta'he*" the animated name of this eastern direction. Its power essence is "fog (*Mah'ehn'o*: the Turtle in reference to its slow movement)" that has the power of blindness to hide the people from danger. Its color is white.
- (2) The Southern direction is "*Soh'voon*" to which the new life (child) grows to become an adolescent and is represented by "*Soh'voon'tahe*," the animated name of this southern direction. Its power is thunder (*Noh'no'mah*: in reference to its loud noise in shaking the earth to bring things to renewed life and new growth) and lightning (*Ho'e'tah*) that has the power of growth and destruction. Its color is yellow.
- (3) The Western direction is "*Onx'Soh'voon*," to which the life grows to adulthood, and is represented by "*On'soh'voon'tahe*," the animated name of this western direction. Its power is the "Wind (*Ha'hash'e*)" and is at times referred to by the old ones as "*Max'ha'noh'vih'tan* (the big trickster)." Its color is red, representing the ripeness of natural fruit and the fullness of growth to participate in the procreation of the *Maheo*.
- (4) The Northern direction is "*Noh'tohm*," to which a person grows old in going back to the Creator from whence they came, and is represented by "*Noh'tah'moh'ta*," the animated name for this northern direction. Its power is the "cold elements (*Tsi'tohn*)" with power to cull the infirm and to refresh life for the spring season to come. Its color is black which is the symbol of victory in having made it through the full cycle of life. The medicine people sometimes refer to *Noh'tah'moh'ta* as "*Ho'he'maha'kess'o*: old man winter," or "*Voh'kim*: cold winter cloud person" in their ceremonial prayers during the course of the winter.

Through the medium of their sacred spiritual ways in connection with Grandmother Earth, the Cheyenne people believe they can harness the creative power essences of the universe to benefit their physical existence on this earth. For instance, United States Army accounts of battles with the American Indian are replete with events where they couldn't kill a warrior, such as *Sauhsti* (Bat) as he was known to his people, and with great respect was known to the white soldiers as "Roman Nose." He was named after the bat because he seemed to fly like one in jumping from place to place

while fighting on the battlefield. After putting up a strong valiant fight for his people, he finally fell on the battlefield when he didn't have adequate time to properly prepare himself through the sacred ceremony that gave him the power of protection from harm. Also, the people were protected during the trek to their northern homelands from Oklahoma Territory, in using the power essences of *Hessen'ta'he* for their protection. These protective power essences are called: *Hoa'ho'oh'doh'histosti*. The medicine people believe the Cheyenne people are the only ones blessed with these sacred protective ways. Although these sacred ways didn't win them the war, they sustained them well enough to reach and regain their northern homelands that they are determined to keep forever (Grover Wolf Voice, age 81, 1972). And, as long as they continue in their sacred ways they will continue to sustain them in their own homelands as a nation of Northern Cheyenne people well into the future times.

It has been told by one of the old people (Henry Little Coyote, 1958, age 83, Keeper of the Sacred Buffalo Hat Covenant) that the Great Lakes Region is the center of the universe (*Seto'voh'heh*) because that is the place where all the above described powers work at once, i.e., a person can see and hear thunder and lightning, wind, hail and fog during the course of severe storms that hit these great bodies of water.

Cheyenne territory naturally encompassed the migration pattern of the great buffalo herds. They followed these herds from the Great Lakes and Missouri River regions in the early spring, then to the south and west, then northward along the Rocky Mountains in the late spring and early summer, along the Big Horns and up into Canada during the course of the summer season, and across Canada eastward in the fall season and back down into the Great Lakes and Missouri River regions for their wintering grounds. It is said that these buffalo herds in their migration pattern, followed the seasonal growth of their food supply. Although some anthropologists call this a "buffalo culture," given the changes in their way of making their livelihood, which also included being fisherman, farmers and hunters of the buffalo, it would be more appropriate to call it a "renewable cyclic culture based on the infinite rebirth of the universe and the earth lands," i.e., in the making of their earth symbols upon which they make their altars, the Cheyenne are aware that the universe is infinite in its cyclic nature of birth, death and rebirth. Cheyenne cosmology can only be fully understood in the context of its cyclic nature – thereby making it whole and in balance.

For many millennia in which their sacred spiritual ways evolved from the North American earth lands, the Cheyenne in their sacred construction of symbols representing their universe knew that Grandmother Earth was spherical. In fact, the medicine people conducting ceremonies use certain basic elements from the earth rolled into a sphere (ball) in the reenactment of the creation of the human male and female, and call on all the life beings and elements of the universe to be included in these world renewal ceremonies. The earth symbols they use for their renewal ceremonies can be found in the star formations of the universe.

The Cheyenne also tell of regions where they once lived, in following the great buffalo herds and in their exploratory travels throughout the North American continent:

- Their Northern Homelands in Northeast Canada between the Hudson Bay and James Bay Regions they called: *Noh'tom'his'toah'o'o'mihna* (northern mountainous regions of our origins).
- The Great Lakes region they called: *Sti'maxih'mih'sih'e'voo'ev* (the place where the great waters appear onto the land in a cloudy mist).
- One of the most recent homeland regions of the *Suhtio*, which the Cheyenne refer to themselves as being from, they called: *Issih'oom'mih'tah* (where the marsh waters flow into the dark brushy country).
- The Expanding Sand Hills Country near the Great Lakes they called: *Nih'o'mah'e'tanihn* (the ceremonial term the *Tsi'sti'stas* (Cheyenne proper) refer to themselves as is *Nih'o'mah'e'taneo*: Expanding Sand Hill People). It was a common practice in those days for different bands of our people to refer to themselves in being from a certain place and naming themselves after that place.
- The Mississippi River Region they called: *Maxea'yoh'he'e* (Big River country).
- The Missouri River Region they called: *E'o'mih'tah* (dark brushy country of the Greasy River in reference to the foamy substance floating in the waters).
- The Great Plains Regions of the west they called: *Sti'max'e'toh'toah'ev*.
- The Black Hills Country they called: *Mok'e'tahvo'honah*.
- The Nebraska and Colorado Territories they called: *Nohm'hastoh'sti'max'to'toah'ev* (southern great plains).
- The Rocky Mountain Region which included the Big Horn Mountains and the Glacier Mountain Range going into Canada they called: *Ho'hoe'nah'tsi'om'mohsti*.
- The Kansas and Oklahoma Territories they called: *Ho'e'sti'xah'hote* (the place of the hot earth).
- The Texas Territory they called: *To'hoa'no'e'hoeva* (the parched place with thick earth cracks).
- The Northwest Canadian Region they called: *Sti'enh'mah'eyah* or *Mah'oom'sti'enh'ma'eyah* (where the ice sheet ends).
- Lake De Smet near the town of Buffalo, Wyoming, they called: *Max'e'ne'hanev* (where the *ma'steheo'nih'taneo*: Kiowa/Apache people moved into the great body of

water).

- The Tongue River, Powder River and Otter Creek regions they call: *Ho'ho'nah'shi'e* (shaley rock earth country).

Although at times in their exploratory wanderings throughout the North American Continent the Cheyenne lived a sedentary way of life in the eastern sections of the country and planted corn and squash, to a greater extent they followed the great buffalo herds in their migration pattern. In so doing, they always stayed close to the many water ways which provided them shelter from the cold elements, water, wood and grass for their horses and good hunting. In other words, during their wanderings throughout the vast territory of the North American continent, the Cheyenne at times evolved different life styles in adapting to different lands and climates they encountered.

The Tribe didn't live or move together as one group, but rather in Bands. Each Band, based on the extended family systems, had its own names for it, which was different from the main body and the other Bands, which numbered approximately ten. The only time they came together as one Tribe was for Tribal level ceremonies. Throughout the many millennia the Cheyenne came to know that being flexible and adaptive to the differing lands they encountered empowered them to continue to survive as a people. And so, they were naturally averse to anything that threatened this method of adaptation in living in harmony with their natural environment as expressed in the living creative spirit of the universe. Given that they were once a self-sufficient people, after their defeat they have yet to be given adequate opportunity to adapt to present times and conditions to attain a self-determined independent livelihood.

II. Northern Cheyenne History.

A. The Early Period.

According to academic historians, the Cheyenne (*Tse-tsehese-stahase*) originated in the Great Lakes region. They began moving from Ontario and the headwaters of the Mississippi River in northern Minnesota, southwest towards the Dakotas during the early 1700s (Weist, 1977:14-16). There they became farmers who lived in major river valleys and grew corn, beans and squash as their staple crops. The Northern Cheyenne themselves tell a somewhat different story which Joe Little Coyote recounts below.

Anthropologists have theorized from carbon dating that the Northern American continent was first peopled through the Bering Straits land bridge about 30,000 years ago. There are also some speculations by these same scientists that the North and South American continents may have also been peopled by ancient seafaring peoples long before that. In any event, our people have oral traditions that tell of a great flood; fire coming out of hills; long-nosed beasts (*Toh'seh'seheyoh/Mastodon?*); the great humming sound of large buffalo herds moving across the plains as far as the eye could see; prior to the horse, the swiftness and great endurance of young men and women that could run alongside the great buffalo herds in chasing them into pounds or over cliffs; stories of white men living among them (could they have been Vikings left behind

that were absorbed into the Tribe?); of great ice sheets (12,000 years ago?); of other human species quite unlike them (the old people telling Anthropologist George Dorsey of hairy people); their children playing on the edge of the forest with the offspring of large, hairy, human-like creatures; the *mihn'e* (large horned serpent like creatures that live near springs and rivers); the disappearance and reappearance of the moon's pet star (*Tah'esshe'his'toh'steo*); and other stories too numerous to mention here.

Western anthropologists, linguistic genealogists and ethnologists identify our Tribe as belonging to the Algonquin linguistic stock of aboriginal peoples who inhabited the northeastern regions of what is now Canada. The old people called these regions the northern homelands "*Notum'histah'o'o'mih'nah*," in reference to the region where the Cheyenne people broke off with the main body of other Algonquin speaking peoples they were once a part thereof. In this respect one could say that was where they came from, and where they came from prior to that is lost in the primeval mists of time, and is left to the speculations of archeologists and anthropologists. It is said that in these early times all the different tribes of people spoke and understood each other's language. During the 1400s and 1500s anthropologists speculate that our ancestors moved down into the western parts of the Great Lakes Region, and southward into the Mississippi River country (*Maxeh'yoh'he'e*: Big River), on to the Missouri River country and on to the Black Hills country, etc. They report that around the 1600s their livelihood mainly consisted of being planters of corn and squash, being fisherman, natural fruit and other natural food gatherers, and hunters of small game.

The Cheyenne people tell of a legend of how they obtained their first sacred foods that consisted of meat, corn, natural fruits and water. These foods, which are prepared in an sacred ceremonial way, are considered healing medicine and are still traditionally prepared and used in their ceremonials to this very day. Prior to partaking of these foods, a small portion is given back to Grandmother Earth to ensure there will be plenty for future times ahead (this is called: *e'sti'nih'nistostil*). Throughout the millennia the Cheyenne identity evolved through an adaptation process to differing land conditions which required new methods of making a livelihood.

Beyond the 1400s and 1500s, these western scientists and ethnologists can only speculate about the origins and pre-historic culture(s) of the Cheyenne. In these regards, more accurate information about the pre-historic times of the Cheyenne can only be found in their oral traditions passed down within their familial institutions. These oral traditions tell of times prior to the 1600s living in the dark brushy country in the Great Lakes region. Deep in the dark forests medicine people would visit other medicine people of other tribal peoples. In addition to teaching each other about their ways and beliefs, they learned about the white man (including the Black Robes) from other tribal peoples that either had prior knowledge of him and his strange ways, and of his steadily coming inland disrupting the tranquility and balance of things that had stood for a long, long time. This new knowledge, in which the white man and his ways was totally alien to them, was accounted for and found explanation in the psychic sphere of their mythology. Over the many millennia, having highly developed psychic abilities to see into the future, in knowing then that the ways of the white man were to be disruptive to their environment and culture, the Cheyenne were able to extrapolate how this was to affect them in the future. Pursuant to this, in knowingly anticipating these disruptive

effects, the Cheyenne began moving in a westward direction to avoid these anticipated disruptive influences. These disruptive influences were the commerce and attendant philosophical intrusions and expansions of the white man.

Beginning about 1600 to avoid contacts with these encroachments of European colonists, the *Tsi'sti'stas* moved in a westward direction from the Great Lakes region to the Missouri River region. In that region, some time around 1610-1620, while out hunting during the winter season, a group of *Tsi'sti'stas* warrior societies suddenly met up with a group of *Suhtio* who were also out hunting. They each thought the other were from an enemy Tribe. While preparing to fight they shouted orders to their warriors and discovered to their great surprise they could understand one another. They both stood down in their preparations to fight and called out to one another inquiring about each other. Finally, each group sent emissaries out to meet and told each other about their Covenants and that they would go back and report to their respective camps on each side of the Missouri River. After a time the Keeper of the Sacred Arrow Covenant sent a formal invitation for a visit to the Keeper of the Sacred Buffalo Hat Covenant. Upon arriving in the early morning with a contingent of warrior societies and their extended families, the Keeper of the Sacred Buffalo was told to camp to the north of the Keeper of the Sacred Arrows, and that a tipi would be erected at the center of the camp where they would formally meet.

After visiting for about one moon's time, in which their respective people's visited each other across the iced-over river, and learned that they had very similar beliefs, traditions and languages, a bond was formed to be mindful of their kinship similarities to one another, no matter where they might be. Before sun light, as the *Suhtio* Keeper prepared to move back across the river, they discovered that the ice had broken and the dangerous ice floes prevented them from moving back across. After a time, the *Tsi'sti'stas* prepared to move on, as they knew the buffalo herds would move out from the water regions to follow their migration pattern. The *Suhtio* Keeper, knowing that it was dangerous without the main body of his people, moved off under the protection of the *Tsi'sti'stas* hoping that one day they would find the rest of their people. It is speculated that the main body of *Suhtio* moved into what is today called Canada, never to be heard from again. After a time of getting to know one another and in integrating their beliefs, traditions and customs into one cultural expression, and being provided a place in the northwest camp circle of the *Tsi'sti'stas*, the *Tsi'sti'stas* and the *Suhtio* Keeper's people became one Cheyenne Nation.

From accounts of western ethnologists spanning the time around 1640 to around the 1830s, we know that the Cheyenne engaged in commerce with Europeans as the Hudson's Bay Company and other trading companies began to trade in fur pelts in surrounding regions. The Cheyenne were entrepreneurs in their own right, trading outright or brokering deals between these companies and other Tribes. They were shrewd traders in bartering to meet whatever their needs were at that time, and in meeting other friendly peoples they exchanged ideas and other kinds of useful information.

About 1804, the Lewis and Clark expedition also made contact with the Cheyenne people, telling them that there were great numbers of white people coming

into the country and nothing could stop them. They were given gifts of tobacco and dry goods and were also told about the great and wonderful blessings the white man's civilization would bring to this country. (Henry Little Coyote, 1959).

On July 4, 1825, while living in the Missouri River and Black Hills regions, a small group of Cheyenne, not representative of the entire Cheyenne Nation, were approached by the Federal government and induced to sign a "friendship treaty" which provided for recognition of the sovereignty of the United States and its right to regulate trade with them. The government considered it legal and binding to the entire Tribe. The Cheyenne did not realize that this treaty meant giving power to the United States to interfere in their future affairs.

Sometime in the 1830s the Cheyenne Nation, because of personal preferences, began splitting into northern and southern Branches. The Southern Cheyenne preferring the amenities of trading and living in the southern regions, primarily encompassing the southern part of Colorado Territory. The Northern Cheyenne preferred living close to their Lakota relatives and the mild climate of their northern homelands encompassing the Black Hills, the Powder River, the Yellowstone River and the Tongue River Regions in the Dakota and Montana Territories.

B. Conflict and War.

In the 1800s an increasing number of Euroamerican settlers and gold seekers moved into southeast Montana and other part of the Great Plains region. The settlers brought diseases that ravaged large numbers of Indian people and whiskey which undermined relations between Tribal leaders and warriors. European cattle began to disrupt the grazing and migration patterns of the buffalo. Especially on the Central and Southern plains, war began to break out due to these commercial encroachments which did not respect the territorial interests of the Cheyenne and other Indian people.

In the late 1840s, the United States government established military outposts and an Indian agency in the Upper Platte River valley. In an attempt to control the relationships among the various Plains tribes and between the white settlers and the Indians, the American government convened a treaty council at Fort Laramie in 1851 which included the nations of the Sioux, the Cheyenne, the Arapaho, the Crow and Shoshone. The Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851 assigned the Cheyenne and Arapaho to lands south of the North Platte River and north of the Arkansas River, from their headwaters eastward to the forks of the Platte (in present day Wyoming, Nebraska, Colorado and Kansas). The area north of the North Platte River was assigned to the Sioux. However, there were both Northern Cheyenne and Northern Arapaho bands living in the Sioux territory. The government hoped that by assigning territories to the Cheyenne and the Arapaho, all out warfare could be averted. However, the Cheyenne and Arapaho were allowed to continue to live and hunt north of the Platte with the Sioux (Weist, 1977). The informal geographic division between the Northern and Southern Cheyenne bands began to take on political significance with this treaty action. The bands living on the Northern and Central plains, north of the South Platte River, became known as the Northern Cheyenne and Northern Arapaho, while those living between the South Platte and Arkansas rivers became known as the Southern Cheyenne and

Southern Arapaho.

The Tribal territories assigned by the 1851 treaty were essentially ignored. From the 1850s onward, the Cheyenne and other Plains tribes came into increasing conflict with Euroamerican settlers which led to escalating violence. In 1861, the Southern Cheyenne and Southern Arapaho entered into the Treaty of Fort Wise of 1861, which set aside a small reservation in southeastern Colorado Territory for the Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho where the Federal government promised them that they would not be attacked. The government had tried to get the Northern Cheyenne and Arapaho to recognize the government's authority and settle onto this reservation, but they refused. They preferred not to abandon their traditional hunting grounds on the Central Plains, and continued their raids along the North Platte, resisting the commercial and military intrusions into what they considered to be their territories (Weist, 1977: 49, 53).

During the Civil War, United States government troops were sent south from the Plains and the settlers were allowed to form volunteer militias. The Colorado Volunteer Militia led by Colonel John M. Chivington, a Methodist minister, waged a campaign of extermination against the Cheyenne which culminated in the 1864 Sand Creek Massacre, in which a peaceful Cheyenne village led by Chief Black Kettle was attacked and 137 Cheyenne were massacred, mostly old people, women and children. Nellie White Frog, who was an adopted German girl, told how the soldiers would throw live babies into the burning fires of their lodges. Chief Black Kettle had been given an American flag and was instructed to raise the flag in the event there was danger from U.S. soldiers. He attempted to raise the flag along with a white flag when he saw the soldiers of the Colorado Volunteers. After the massacre, Colonel Chivington and his troops paraded into the town of Denver, proudly displaying and waving the private parts of the Cheyenne who were massacred at Sand Creek. The Sand Creek Massacre led to a period of all-out warfare between the United States government and the Northern Cheyenne and other Plains tribes.

In October 1865, the Southern Cheyenne and Southern Arapaho signed the treaty of the Little Arkansas, by which they obtained new reservation lands in south-central Kansas and north-central Oklahoma Territories. In 1869, President Grant signed an executive order establishing a permanent reservation for them in western Oklahoma.

In 1865, the Federal government once again tried to end the hostilities between the United States and the Northern Cheyenne and Sioux nations by convening a treaty council at Fort Laramie. Even though the Northern Cheyenne initially signed the treaty, final negotiations broke down when it was learned that during the process of these negotiations, United States military forces were being sent into the Powder River country to build a series of forts to protect immigrants along the Bozeman Trail, in the continuing commercial encroachments of white settlers throughout Northern Cheyenne territory. And so, hostilities continued.

These hostilities led to the Fetterman Fight of December 21, 1866, in which an eighty-one man contingent of United States troops under Captain William J. Fetterman from Fort Kearny, sent out to aid a wood train, and were wiped out by the Northern

Cheyenne and Sioux under the leadership of Two Moon, Little Wolf, Crazy Horse and Buffalo Hump. Prior to this, Fetterman had bragged that with eighty men he could ride through the entire Sioux nation.

Finally, in 1868, the Federal government attempted to end hostilities by convening yet another treaty council at Fort Laramie. In the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868, the Federal government acceded to the demands of the Northern Cheyenne, Northern Arapaho and Sioux nations, and established the Great Sioux Reservation in South Dakota. An "unceded Indian Territory" was provided for in this treaty, encompassing the lands north of the North Platte River, from east of the summit of the Bighorn Mountains eastward to the Missouri River, to be held in common by all the Tribes. The United States also pledged to abandon its forts guarding the Bozeman Trail.

The Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 failed to bring a lasting peace. Hostilities continued as a result of the encroachments by gold prospectors into territories set aside for the Tribes by the Treaty. The Federal government tried to purchase the Black Hills after gold was found. The Tribes refused. The government also attempted to buy the mineral rights, but this was also refused and hostilities continued. Government officials felt the only way to resolve this problem was to force the Tribes living and hunting in their traditional territories of the Powder River, the Tongue River and Yellowstone River countries onto the Sioux reservation and keep them contained there.

In 1874 the U.S. Army led by General George Armstrong Custer invaded the Paha Sapa, the Black Hills, sacred to both the Sioux and the Cheyenne. This land had been guaranteed as Indian land in the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868. The gold miners followed the army and soon were coming and going at will. The Indians retaliated. In August of 1875, a government commission, through promises and threats, got the Chiefs of the Great Sioux reservation to surrender the Black Hills and other lands, comprising approximately one-third of the reservation, and all the unceded territory in the Powder River country. In December of 1875, then President Grant ordered that all Indians must move onto reservations by January of 1876.

On March 17, 1876, General George Crook directed cavalry under the command of Colonel J. J. Reynolds to attack the Cheyenne camp led by Two Moons. Two Moons's camp was a large village containing 105 Cheyenne lodges, Minneconjous, and Oglalas located at Thompson Creek near present day Moorehead, Montana. The Oglalas camped with Two Moons were followers of the headman He Dog, a close associate of war chief Crazy Horse. The Indian survivors of Reynolds's attack moved up the Powder River to join Crazy Horse's camp. On March 27, 1876, Crazy Horse's people took in the refugees from the Reynolds attack. They gave them all the supplies and clothes they could spare but they did not have enough to go around. Consequently, in April, Crazy Horse moved his people north to the Chalk Buttes area where Sitting Bull's band was camped on Blue Earth Creek (Moeller and Moeller, 1987:90; Gray, 1976:323-325).

Warrior ceremonies were held, sweat lodges were set up for purifying ceremonies and Crazy Horse was made war chief for life. Word spread of the war

council and many more Oglala and Cheyenne along with Minneconjous, Hunkpapa, Sans Arc, Santee, Brule and Blackfoot Sioux came to join the camp. The Cheyenne warrior Wooden Leg also reports returning to this area after the Sioux and Cheyenne success at the Battle of the Little Bighorn (Marquis, 1931).

Eventually this led to the Battle of the Rosebud on June 16, 1876, where the Cheyenne woman warrior "White Buffalo Calf Woman" saved her brother. On June 25, 1876, the Crow, Cheyenne, Arapaho and Sioux all battled at Little Bighorn. The Crow were allied with Custer while the Sioux, Cheyenne and Arapaho were allied against the United States Army and fighting to avoid placement on reservations. In the end, Custer and his entire contingent of 225 men of the United States Seventh Cavalry were wiped out by the combined Lakota Sioux, Cheyenne and Arapaho. Prior to this, General Custer visited the Cheyenne camped along the Washita River in Colorado Territory, talking to them about need for peaceful relations. He was invited into the Sacred Arrow lodge to smoke the pipe with the Cheyenne. After smoking the pipe, he was warned by the Keeper Stone Forehead not to bother the Cheyenne anymore, or he would end up as the ashes that were being emptied on the heel of his boot. General Custer promised that he would do everything possible to bring peace to the Cheyenne.

In January of 1877, a group of Northern Cheyenne led by Two Moons, and a group of Oglalas led by Crazy Horse, fought a detachment of the Fifth Infantry, commanded by Colonel Nelson A. Miles (*Noah'koh'sti'nih'heh'nah*: Bear Coat Miles), in the valley of the Tongue River. The Battle of the Tongue River, also known as the Battle of the Wolf Mountains or Belly Butte Battle, was fought on the east bank of the Tongue River, just south of the mouth of Hanging Women Creek, 18 miles northeast of the Tongue River Dam. A single rock cairn marks the location where Big Crow, the only Cheyenne killed in the battle, died (Stands In Timber and Liberty, 1972:22n). Hostilities continued until the surrender of Two Moons to General Miles at Fort Keogh at the confluence of the Tongue River and Yellowstone rivers in April of 1877.

The losses suffered by Two Moons and his band at the Battle of Tongue River forced the last off-reservation band of Cheyenne's to move to Fort Keogh in April, 1877 (Weist, 1977:76). The Northern Cheyenne at this time had split into four groups: Coal Bear and his people went to their Arapaho relatives in Wyoming, Little Chief and his people went to Oklahoma to their relatives, Chiefs Dull Knife and Little Wolf and their people went to the Great Sioux reservation in South Dakota to their relatives, and Two Moons and his people went to Fort Keogh to serve as scouts for the U.S Army. Two Moons and his warriors later returned south to their village at the mouth of Deer Creek on the Tongue River (Powell, 1969:180).

In 1877, a group of 972 Northern Cheyenne under the leadership of Chiefs Dull Knife (*Vo'he'hiv*: Morning Star) and Little Wolf were taken to Oklahoma to live with the Southern Cheyenne. In 1878, finding the hot and humid climate to be inhospitable, and suffering from disease, they decided to go home to their northern homelands in the Tongue River Valley region, where they knew the environment was more healthy for them. After their request to the government to be allowed to return north was rejected, about 300 Northern Cheyenne under the leadership of Dull Knife and Little Wolf, defied the government and escaped to journey north, knowing full well that they would be

attacked and possibly wiped out by the United States soldiers. They walked over two thousand miles home in the freezing cold, being hunted and harassed by at least two divisions of soldiers along the way. This was their trail of tears, but they were determined to go home, rather than die in this hot and humid climate without at least trying to make some effort to get back to their northern homelands.

In their trek home, they relied on their sacred cultural ways to sustain them, with an old medicine woman by the name of Northern Woman: *Notah'mih'heh*, divining the safe directions in their trek home. By using sacred ceremonies, she told the people what to do, (such as, lying on their backs in the face of tornadoes hitting them), shielded and hid them with the powers of *Hessen'ta'he* in which soldiers thought they were small herds of buffalo when they came close to finding them, and showed which directions were safe to go when they were faced with other obstacles. (Woodrise, 1972).

In northwestern Nebraska, the Cheyenne split into two groups. Chief Dull Knife's band decided to try and reach their Lakota relatives at the Red Cloud Agency on the Great Sioux reservation. Chief Little Wolf's band decided to continue on home to the Tongue River homelands. On October 23, 1878, Chief Dull Knife and his band were found by soldiers from Fort Robinson and surrendered. The government decided to send them back to Oklahoma under armed escort. Upon their refusal they were confined without food or water. On January 9, 1879, deciding it was better to die at Fort Robinson rather being sent back south, they broke out and were slaughtered in the snow by the soldiers. Out of the 149 that were imprisoned at the Fort, 61 were killed. Many of the survivors were wounded. The survivors were sent to the Pine Ridge Agency and were allowed to stay with their Lakota relatives.

In early 1879, the Northern Cheyenne were divided into four groups. Those under Little Wolf were at Fort Keogh in Montana; those under Dull Knife were at Pine Ridge; another group remained in Oklahoma under Little Chief and Wild Hog; and some were living in Wyoming with the Northern Arapaho. Shortly afterwards, in January 1881, with the intercession of General Nelson A. Miles, all of the Northern Cheyenne were sent to Fort Keogh and were eventually allowed to move south and take homesteads near the Tongue River and on Rosebud and Muddy Creeks under the Indian Homestead Act of 1875. The Northern Cheyenne were finally back together in their Tongue River Valley and Otter Creek homelands. There they continued to live their traditional culture and began to develop a new way of making a livelihood for themselves based on the western agricultural industry of farming and ranching.

After disputes arose between the Northern Cheyenne and white ranchers who had settled in the area, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs ordered a special investigation in 1883. This investigation led to a recommendation that the Northern Cheyenne be permitted to remain where they were and a reservation established. (Feeney, 1986:3-6).

As Joe Little Coyote recounts:

Around 1878, while Chief Two Moon's people were serving as scouts for the U.S. Military at Fort Keogh (near the present town of Miles city, Montana), pursuant to the Indian Homestead Act of 1875, which afforded Indian people benefits similar to those of the Homestead Act of 1862, General Nelson Miles had Captain Ezra Ewers (known to the Cheyennes at Fort Keogh as White Hat) take a number of the Cheyenne Scouts out into the country south of Fort Keogh to mark out the territory where they could stake out their homesteads. They were instructed to ensure they built their homesteads 160 acres apart from one another. This territory encompassed an area beginning from Fort Keogh east along the Yellowstone River to the mouth of the Powder River, up the Powder River to the Big Horn Mountains near Sheridan, WY, west along this mountain range to the Big Horn River, down north to the Yellowstone river and back down to Fort Keogh. The reservation, which was to be their permanent homeland, comprising approximately 447,000 acres, was finally created by Executive Orders of 1884 and 1900, with the middle channel of the Tongue River as its eastern border, near the frontier cow-town of Ashland in southeastern Montana Territory.

C. Establishment of the Northern Cheyenne Reservation.

In 1884, during the peak of the range cattle industry, President Chester A. Arthur created, by an executive order, the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation on unsurveyed lands north of Tongue River. This outraged many of the settlers in the Tongue River and Rosebud Creek valleys. Some ranchers in the Tongue River valley were probably less than enthusiastic about the creation of a Northern Cheyenne Reservation on lands they considered open range. The order stated that the claims of

"bona fide settlers" would be recognized. As a result, there was some activity to file on lands before the deadline. In any event, the Reservation boundaries excluded 46 Northern Cheyenne families who had been encouraged to homestead along the east bank of the Tongue River and along Otter Creek. At the same time, 46 white homesteads, both legal and illegal, had been established within the boundaries of the Reservation. (National Archives Record Group 75, Special Case File 137; Deaver, 1988; Brooke, 1981; Weist, 1977).

There were several attempts in the late 1880s and throughout the 1890s to dissolve the boundaries of the Tongue River Reservation. Tongue River Indian Agent, R. L. Upshaw, stated in 1889 that "a strong effort is being made by the citizens of Custer county to have these Indians removed from here, and many arguments are used in favor of the removal." (Department of the Interior, 1889:236). Special Indian Agent George Milburn's October 28, 1884 report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs recommended the Tongue River Reservation be established on the Rosebud, but he also suggested a better solution was to remove the Northern Cheyenne to an existing

reservation. By June of 1884, Milburn was the attorney representing the Miles City cattlemen opposed to establishing a Northern Cheyenne Reservation. He worked to try to get the Northern Cheyenne homesteaders to move onto the Crow Reservation.

In 1893 a military post was established to maintain order. In 1899, Indian Inspector James McLaughlin went to investigate the possibility of removing the Northern Cheyenne from their Reservation and moving them into the southeast corner of the Crow Reservation. McLaughlin reported that the Northern Cheyenne and the Crow both vehemently opposed such a proposal.

The Cheyenne representatives had several letters from government officials assuring them that they could remain on the Tongue River Reservation undisturbed. (Department of the Interior, 1899:3-4). One of the letters was from General Miles, dated June 1889:

... in regard to the proposed removal of the Indians [Northern Cheyenne], there is no good reason or justice in doing so. They have fulfilled their part of the compact [to remain at peace], ... they have an undoubted right, legally and morally, to remain where they are now located (Department of the Interior, 1899:4).

There is some confusion over which homesteading statutes were applied to the Northern Cheyenne homesteads on the east side of the Tongue River. According to the Department of the Interior 1889 report to the Commissioners, the Tongue River Indian Homesteads were originally taken up under the Homestead Act of March 3 1875¹. It was the guidelines of this Act that Special Indian Agent Milburn explained to the Northern Cheyenne in March and April of 1883. The Tongue River valley was not included as part of the original reservation boundaries. According to Newell it was reserved for Indian homesteads under the Indian Homestead Act of 1886 by the Secretary of the Interior (Newell, 1980b:9-10).

In 1889, three years after the enactment of the Indian Homestead Act, Agent R. L. Upshaw stated that:

at least half of the Northern Cheyenne were homesteading along the Tongue River . . . about half of them on the Rosebud River and its tributaries, Lame Deer and Muddy Creeks, and the other half [the Northern Cheyenne] on Tongue River from the mouth of Hanging Women Creek down to the mouth [of] Stebbin's Creek ... (Department of the Interior, 1889: 234).

Negotiations for a proposed extension of the Northern Cheyenne Reservation east to the Tongue River were then considered in order to present "the most favorable resources for the permanent settlement of the Northern Cheyennes" (Department of the

¹ Letter of Commissioner H. Price, Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, to George Yoakum Sept 9, 1882; and Report of E. D. Bannister, US Special Agent, Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, June 11, 1885

Interior, 1899:6). This required the government to remove 46 white settlers (15 'bona fide' legal settlers, five equitable rights settlers, 18 illegal squatters, and 8 'legal owners') (Department of the Interior, 1899:15-16) from the west side of the Tongue River and 46 Cheyenne families from the east side.

During negotiations, some of the Cheyenne chiefs representing their people sought to prevent the removal of Cheyenne homesteaders by extending the eastern boundary of the reservation to the divide between the Tongue and Powder Rivers. Cheyenne soldier chief, George Standing Elk stated: "We want the reservation extended to the divide east of Tongue River. We do not need the boundaries fenced; mounds are sufficient. We can irrigate from Rosebud and Tongue Rivers." (Department of the Interior, 1899:89). Chief Medicine Bear stated "... leave us here that we may live and die in a country in which we were born." (Department of the Interior, 1899:87).

James McLaughlin's reaction to the Cheyenne testimonies was negative. He responded:

[I] advise you to cheerfully accept the tract of land described, bounded on the east by Tongue River, as it will be utterly useless for me to recommend that your eastern boundary be fixed on the divide east of Tongue River, which would place it midway between Tongue and Powder rivers (Department of the Interior, 1899:90).

The current reservation boundaries were established in 1900. (Weist, 1977). In 1901, the white settlers on the newly expanded reservation lands in the Tongue River valley were ordered to leave. (Newell, 1980b:11). The Federal government paid the 46 white settlers \$150,445 for their "improvements" (buildings etc.) on the west side of the Tongue River and compensated the 46 Cheyenne families with only \$1,150 for their homesteads on the east side. Descendants of these families believe that because the government never paid fair value for these homesteads, the land is still theirs. (Feeney, 1986; Deaver, 1988; Department of the Interior, 1899:15-16).

Even though it is commonly reported that the white ranchers wanted the Cheyenne removed from the Tongue River and Otter Creek areas, according to Joe Little Coyote:

. . . some of the white ranchers and towns people were sympathetic to their plight and cause in trying to establish a permanent homeland in the Tongue River and Otter Creek areas, which has not been reported. In fact, a number of the ancestors of the early Cheyenne and white ranchers in area are still friends from the days the Cheyenne would work for these white ranches in response to their need for help. They have a lot of respect for the Cheyenne who worked for them, and still tell of how they were dependable hard workers. When the government in cooperation with the missionaries prohibited Cheyenne traditional sacred cultural practices, some of the white ranchers living in the Otter Creek areas provided for these ceremonies to be held on their lands, providing line-riders to assist with security and also cattle to help with food requirements.

The Cheyenne people were befriended by a number of poor white people that moved into the Ashland area, sharing some of their food with them in the early 1900s. Many Cheyenne still tell funny stories about each other when they worked for the white ranchers. The Cheyenne also tell of how some of their people actually married into some of the families of these white ranchers, although it was kept quiet because of the popular sentiment among the general white population that thought "intermarriage of the races" was wrong and should not be allowed.

D. Early Reservation History.

Once moved onto the Reservation, the Northern Cheyenne became dependant on the United States government rations for survival. As detailed in Historic Research Associates' historic overview of the Tongue River region (1980:67-68), efforts to acculturate the Northern Cheyenne to the economic and social values and practices of their white neighbors intensified at the turn of the century.

In the early days, Indian reservations were regarded by many as interim solutions, necessary only until the cultural assimilation process worked itself out. Becoming impatient with the slow if presumed inevitable disappearance of the Indian tribes, however, and anxious to more fully appropriate the natural resources on the reservations into the expanding United States economy, early reservation administrative policies became startlingly repressive by today's standards.

The reservations in the late nineteenth century and early decades of the twentieth century were run, under the unfettered and often arbitrary rule of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), as oppressive institutions of forced enculturation. Regulations prohibiting traditional ceremonies, prayer, councils, and even the wearing of native clothing, were promulgated and enforced through Courts of Indian Offenses. Indian people were discouraged from gathering for social events. Whole families were punished through the withholding of rations (essentially meaning starvation) if one of their members aroused the ire of the BIA agent. Children were ripped from their families and sent to boarding schools where they were subjected both to harsh discipline, and too often also to sexual and physical abuse. All of these conditions were made worse, by the corruption of Indian agents into whose hands the fate of the Indians had been placed and who often enriched themselves and their friends with resources appropriated to keep their Indian wards alive.

Conditions became so harsh on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation that the population of the Tribe, already decimated by decades of warfare, continued to decline precipitously as a consequence of semi-starvation and disease, and perhaps despair, during the early Reservation years. These conditions persisted until well into the early mid-century era.

Education was thought to be one of the primary means in acculturating the Northern Cheyenne. The government established a day school in Lama Deer in 1887 and a boarding school in Busby in 1904. A contract school was established at St. Labre

in 1884, which was run by the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions. Ironically, in 1889 the St. Labre School was temporarily closed:

. . . on account of an unreasonable demand on the part of the Indians that the parents should be compensated for allowing their children to go to school; and it was deemed expedient to close the school for a season in order that the Indians might realize their loss and true position (Department of the Interior, 1889:236).

Acculturation also included efforts to discourage traditional medicinal practices in favor of western medical treatments. R. L. Upshaw noted that these efforts met with limited success. In 1889, he stated:

. . . they are too impatient, and if the remedies of the physician fail to give immediate relief they fly off to their own old medicines or a sweat-house, often times destroying the effect of remedies scientifically administered. The habit of submitting themselves to the old doctors is still strong among them ... (Department of the Interior, 1889:234).

To remedy these perceived problems, attendance at Indian schools was made compulsory and the Bureau of Indian Affairs Police was charged with rounding up truant children. Families that did not cooperate had their rations cut. In these boarding schools, Cheyenne children were forbidden to speak the Cheyenne language, required to cut their hair and wear western clothes, and segregated from their families. In addition, the Sun Dance and other native ceremonies were prohibited. (Feeney, 1986:3-7).

Farming and ranching operations were encouraged on the reservation. In 1899, Indian Inspector James McLaughlin noted that:

numerous white settlers told me that they employed the Cheyenne Indians in their harvest fields in preference to the white laborer, but apart from this work for neighboring whites they have had very little opportunity ... other than the cultivation of small garden patches, which, without irrigation in that arid region, seldom amount to anything (Department of the Interior, 1899:7).

James McLaughlin mentioned that the irrigation of small tracts of bottom lands along the Rosebud, Muddy and Little Deer Creek valleys could be done at comparatively small expense.

The cost of taking out ditches along the Tongue River would be much greater ... yet the greater quantity of land susceptible of being brought under irrigation along the west side of Tongue River might justify the outlay; but this can be done by individual Indians as they advance and recognize the benefits they would derive from the same (As quoted McLaughlin in Dept. of the Interior, 1899:8).

While Northern Cheyenne farming and ranching activities were restricted to the reservation, land elsewhere in the Tongue River valley was being settled almost exclusively by whites.

“Efforts by whites to establish ranches and to develop available resources have been mirrored by similar attempts on the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation” (Newell, 1980b:67). In 1903, the Northern Cheyenne received 1,000 cows and 40 bulls, and in 1907 received another 1000 head of cattle as a result of earlier congressional appropriations (Weist, 1977:161). By 1909, Indian Superintendent J. R. Eddy reported that stock raising was the “natural business” for the Indians of the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation, by which name the Tongue River Reservation came to be known. Eddy stated that:

During the year a shipment of four year old steers was made for the Indians running stock on the reservation and it developed that the shipment included the heaviest range steers shipped to Chicago during the year, and that the prices paid were practically the highest offered during the season (Eddy in Weist, 1977:161).

By 1912, Northern Cheyenne ranchers owned a total of 12,000 head of cattle and 15,000 horses. (Feeney, 1986: 3-8). According to Joe Little Coyote, the Cheyenne “found this to be a culturally appropriate way of making a livelihood which was compatible with living off the land as they had always done in the past as fishermen, farmers, hunters of small game and natural food gatherers, and hunters of the buffalo in the Great Lakes and the Plains regions of North America. “

The Bureau of Indian Affairs then began a program to reduce the size of the Northern Cheyenne horse herds and place the Cheyenne cattle herds under communal ownership. This policy led to the destruction of the Cheyenne ranching economy. By 1929, the Cheyenne had only 3,000 horses. As a result of BIA mismanagement, the communal cattle herd declined to 4,200 by 1924 and was then sold or slaughtered to provide government rations. The Bureau then leased the best grazing land on the Reservation to white ranchers. (Feeney, 1986:3-8).

Drought years began in 1917. The drought of 1919 encompassed the eastern two-thirds of the state. With the drought came other problems, such as grasshoppers, fires and high winds. In the Tongue River region, the years 1919 to 1920 saw a shortage of water for irrigation purposes along the river. (Malone and Roeder, 1976; Malone et al., 1991; Lamphere, 1935). For example, by 1920, the Cheyenne irrigation ditch at Birney, originally built in 1910, had been abandoned and 500 acres of promising irrigation lands had been ruined by alkali seepage. (Weist, 1977:164). A general economic depression followed the drought, accompanied by declining wheat and cattle prices. This economic climate affected Indian as well as white farmers and ranchers. Another drought cycle began in 1929, accompanied by economic depression.

Although Cheyennes were never to bear arms again after being subdued, it is noteworthy that many Cheyennes fought and died for the United States in the great wars of the 20th century.

According to Joe Little Coyote:

The Federal government in 1918 came to the chiefs of the Tribe requesting them to allow their people to serve in the United States Armed Services. This was symbolically accepted by the Chiefs kissing the American flag at a ceremony that was held near the hill where Head Chief (who was about 28 years old), and his friend Young Mule (who was 13 years old and a student at one of the Christian Mission schools.) had charged down the hill to meet their deaths rather than be dealt with by the white man's justice system. Their families being desperate for food, they had killed a beef and upon discovery by one of the white men who called them 'dogs,' Head Chief shot him. Upon learning that the agency police were coming after them, they elected to fight the soldiers stationed at the Lane Deer Agency. This incident happened at the east forks four miles east of Lane Deer in September of 1890. In any event, on a per capita percentage basis, more Cheyenne people than any other ethnic group in the United States have served in the wars the United States has been involved in since World War I. A number of Cheyenne have lost their lives in these wars, which is a matter of record with the United States government.

Joe Little Coyote summarizes this early period of Reservation history in powerful language:

After surviving outright extermination and being placed into confinement status on the Tongue River Reservation in southeastern Montana Territory, the Christian Missionaries with the cooperation and financial support of the Bureau of Indian Affairs undertook behavioral modification programs and religious indoctrination programs for the purpose of civilizing the Northern Cheyenne people through a process of western education and Christianization which was designed to wipe out their way of life, to take their remaining lands away from them and to assimilate them into the mainstream of white American society. With these cultural genocidal programs the native language of the Northern Cheyenne was prohibited and the way these programs were administered subjected the children to harsh physical punishment for speaking it in school. The children were forced to attend Christian Mission and government boarding schools -- otherwise their parents were taken by the agency police to the government agency for sanction, e.g., they did not receive their food rations or had to do hard labor. Our religious ceremonies were outlawed by the BIA at the insistence of Christian Missionaries, our Cheyenne language was prohibited and we received severe punishment for speaking it in the schools our children were forced to go to. The children were forced to go through a type of education that frustrated their abilities to learn at our best levels of achievement in that, as defenseless children, they were mercilessly subjected to harsh, inhumane, cultural-genocidal practices in the intentional psychic destruction of their identity as a Cheyenne people.

The damage inflicted by these genocidal practices thrust the children into a profound state of uncertainty as to just who or what they were. The consequent despairing effects of this needless violence against the Cheyenne people, coupled with their continuing, desperate, impoverished conditions, are still being experienced in higher than normal rates of self-destructive behavior on the Reservation, when compared to the dominant society of America today.

Many of these sad facts are well known due to the personal experiences of a large number of contemporary Cheyennes having gone through the Christian Missionary and government boarding school experience, still bearing the emotional trauma and scars of being torn from the love and care of their families, being publicly ridiculed and humiliated for speaking our native language, made to feel embarrassed of their old people and our heritage, and silently having to take beatings that created fearful and submissive children. There was a favorite saying among these purveyors of western civilization: kill the Indian and save the child for God and Country.

This so-called civilizing process had a profound harmful impact on the humanity of the Northern Cheyenne people, and the trauma resulting from this has been carried over into these modern times. This trauma must be addressed through some healing process that reorients us to knowing that we are Cheyenne (because no matter what we do we can't be anything else than what we are) and understanding our world and our place in it, i.e., the Cheyenne Way is to re-center ourselves and thus make keener sense of our lives (Dr. Frank Rowland, 2001). In spite of what happened to us, we find the spirit of who we are as a people still intact. Now that there is some developing recognition of our "allodial rights to existence as an indigenous people in our homelands," [and] being a resilient people our spirit will ultimately serve to provide the driving force in finding a way to survive today and into the new millennium. (Little Coyote, 2001:6-8).

When the federal government in cooperation with the Christian Missionaries prohibited the Cheyenne religion. Those who practiced their ceremonials were reported to the authorities. They were taken to the government agency and sanctioned to do hard labor in subzero weather. When some of the old medicine people were caught doctoring they were physically whipped with horse quirts and beaten by the agency police, sustaining injuries some never recovered from (according to old agency records that were not completely destroyed in a fire sometime in the latter 1950s. BIA, pre-1950). The agency police would rope their sweat lodges and ceremonial tipis and drag them apart.

In addition, the Cheyenne people were subjected to methods of mass punishment. When the old Medicine people were caught performing their prayer ceremonies the whole family also had to suffer the consequences

of having their food rations withheld, and were relegated to the end of the line in other benevolent dispensations (designed for behavior modification) bestowed upon them by the government agents. As a result, the conduct of their ceremonies had to go “underground” and were performed out in the hills, in secret. The Missionaries preached that the religious ceremonial ways of the Cheyenne were unclean and of the devil. This was used to influence government policy in the prohibition of their sacred ways.

Today, this fear of retaliation is still present to a great extent in the psyche of many contemporary Cheyenne, and to some extent this fear continues to be reflected when the Cheyenne conduct their ceremonies. As a result, there is a lot of confusion and misinformation about the traditional medicine ways, and many of the present Medicine people who were properly educated and trained in these ways continue to be subjected to much undue criticism. Somehow, this has to be corrected if we are to have true religious freedom of expression in the practice of our sacred ceremonial ways.

In spite of the terrible things that happened to them, the Cheyenne people themselves are beginning to find that the spirit of who they are as a people is still intact. Now that there is some developing recognition of their rights to an integral existence as an indigenous people in their homelands, being an adaptable and a resilient people, the Cheyenne cultural spirit will ultimately serve to provide the driving force in finding a way to survive today and into the new millennium.

On September 8, 2002, Kevin Gover, the Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs of the U.S. Department of the Interior, on behalf of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, at the ceremony acknowledging the 175th Anniversary of the establishment of the BIA, issued a formal apology to the American Indian for its historical role in the genocidal acts perpetrated against them, and in accepting this legacy of racism and inhumanity, it also accepted the moral responsibility of putting things right, and vowed that the BIA would never allow this to happen again. The Cheyenne people will wait and see if these promises will actually be kept.

E. Later Reservation History.

Although Congress adopted the General Allotment Act in 1887, 39 years passed before Congress adopted an allotment plan for the Northern Cheyenne Reservation which assigned a 160 acre parcel to each enrolled tribal member, 44 Stat. 690 (1926). Actual allotment did not commence until 1932 and Congress terminated the allotment policy two years later with the enactment of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 (IRA). As a result, virtually all of the Northern Cheyenne Reservation, both allotted and unallotted lands, remains held by the United States in trust for the Tribe or Indian allottees. (Chestnut, 1978; 4-5).

In 1936, the Northern Cheyenne enacted a Constitution which was approved by the Secretary of the Interior under the terms of the IRA. The Constitution established an elected Tribal Council as the governing body of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe as well as a Tribal Court. (Feeney, 1986: 3-9).

In 1954, a paved road was completed through the Reservation and electricity was installed reducing the Reservation's isolation. The Reservation economy remained impoverished, relying primarily on ranching and the subsidies from the Federal government. Land claims litigation against the United States brought in a \$3.8 million settlement during the 1960s which was distributed to tribal membership and used for Tribal economic development and education programs. (Feeney, 1986: 3-9).

According to Joe Little Coyote:

Beginning with the allotment policies in 1926, and the termination policies of the 1950s, the federal government undertook policies to break up the reservation lands in an attempt to get individual allottees to sell their lands into fee status and to terminate the federal status of American Indian Tribes. Fortunately, in the latter 1950s, the John Wooden Legs Administration, instituted a Land Acquisition Program which had the effect of holding the Tribal Land Base together. Otherwise the reservation lands would have been broken up to compromise the sovereign integrity of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe. And, even though these policies were repudiated with the self-determination policies of the 1970s (Pub.L. 93-638), beginning with the Allen Rowland Administration in the latter 1960s, the Tribe has had to fight costly modern day legal wars to protect its reservation homelands from the continuing commercial encroachments by energy-related corporate instrumentalities of the United States.

F. History of Coal Development on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation.

The substantial coal resources of the Northern Cheyenne Reservation have long been recognized. A 1928 Senate report on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation found that:

The entire [Northern Cheyenne] Reservation is underlaid with a thick vein of coal. There are frequent outcroppings. This coal seems to be a cross between lignite and bituminous coal and is of fairly high quality. . . The Coal on the [Northern Cheyenne] Reservation cannot be developed commercially at this time, owing to lack of rail facilities. There is no doubt, however, that some time the coal will prove a valuable asset. [U.S. Senate, 1928: 12848 in Chestnut, 1978].

The Northern Cheyenne Tribe was also aware of the valuable coal resources beneath the Reservation. In 1925, the Tribe petitioned Congress to allot the Reservation's agricultural lands to individual Tribal members but asked Congress to "reserve all mineral, timber and coal lands for the benefit of the Northern Cheyenne

Tribe, said tribe to have absolute control of the same.” See *Northern Cheyenne Tribe v. Hollowbreast*, 425 U.S. 649 (1976).

In the 1926 Northern Cheyenne Allotment Act, Congress provided that timber, coal and other minerals would be reserved for the Tribe’s benefit and could be leased by the Secretary of the Interior with the Tribe’s consent. However, Congress provided that coal, oil and gas and other mineral underlying allotments would become the property of the respective allottees or their heirs after 50 years.

In 1965, the Tribe first received expressions of interest from mining companies in the Reservation’s coal reserves. In 1966, the Tribe asked BIA officials to draft the necessary documents for a public sale of Reservation coal leases. The BIA prepared a form of mining permit to be offered for bid by adapting an official form previously in use under Interior Department regulations. The official form provided for an exclusive prospecting permit, with an option to lease only a portion for the acreage covered by the permit. However, on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation, the option language was substantially expanded to give the permittees an option to lease the entire acreage. The terms and conditions of the coal lease options were established at the time of the offering of the permit when the Tribe and the BIA were uninformed as to the nature and value of the coal reserves covered by the leases. The primary financial terms of the lease options turned out to be far below fair market value. (Chestnut, 1978:11-12).

The first coal sale took place in 1966. Only one bid was received resulting in the issuance of a prospecting permit to the Peabody Coal Company with mining lease options covering 94,000 acres of Reservation land. Additional lease sales took place in 1969 and 1971, resulting in mining lease options being issued for another 260,000 acres of Reservation land. Thus, by 1971 lease option were held by mining companies to virtually the entire unallotted portion of the Reservation. (Chestnut, 1978:12).

At the about same time, the Tribe began to fear that individual Tribal members would attempt to lease allotted lands for coal development and lobbied Congress for legislation that would clarify that ownership of the Reservation subsurface belonged to the Tribe. In 1968, at the request of the Tribe, Congress terminated the grant of mineral rights to the allottees and reserved the mineral rights on the Reservation “in perpetuity for the benefit of the Tribe.” However, the termination was expressly conditioned upon a prior judicial determination that the allottees had not been granted vested rights to the mineral deposits by the 1926 Act. In 1976, the United States Supreme Court held that the allottees had no such vested rights and the Tribe formally regained control of all of the mineral rights underlying the Reservation. *Northern Cheyenne Tribe v. Hollowbreast*, 425 U.S. 649 (1976).

In 1972, the Tribe received an unsolicited offer from the Consolidated Coal Company to lease 70,000 additional acres of Reservation land and rights to mine at least one billion tons of coal. The company wanted to construct four coal gasification plants on the Reservation. In exchange for these rights, Consol offered to pay the Tribe royalties and bonuses substantially higher than those provided in the lease sales offered by the BIA. In addition, the company offered an up-front donation of \$1.5 million for construction of a new medical facility for the Reservation. (Feeney, 1986:2-10).

Due to the substantially enhanced financial terms, Tribal leaders began to suspect that the previous lease agreements were inadequate. In addition, they began to realize that the scale of planned coal development was much larger than they had anticipated. The Tribe hired legal counsel to review the lease documents and numerous violations of Federal regulations were found. (Feeney, 1986: 2-10). In particular, these regulations set an acreage limitation of 2,560 acres on leases and on permits incorporating options to lease. The actual lease options exercised under the prospecting permits were far larger and ranged from 15,300 to 71,550 acres. In addition, the BIA had failed to conduct any kind of environmental impact analysis before issuing the leases. (Chestnut, 1978).

In 1973, the Tribal Council unanimously decided to petition the Secretary of the Interior to cancel the lease agreements. In 1974, the Secretary issued a decision which suspended coal development on the Reservation until environmental impact studies were completed and the Tribe's consent to the expanded lease acreages was obtained. This decision effectively blocked development although it did not formally terminate the leases. (Chestnut, 1978). In 1980 Congress enacted legislation establishing a framework for either mutually agreeing to cancellation of the leases, or failing such agreement, automatic cancellation. Through this legislation, cancellation agreements were made with several large coal companies and other smaller leases were cancelled automatically. (Feeney, 1986:2-11).

Joe Little Coyote summarizes the Tribe's attitude toward coal development as follows:

The Tribe has been under tremendous pressure to develop its vast fossilized energy resources to address its impoverished conditions. In spite of this, the Tribe has chosen not to exploit these resources due to the uncertainties of potential impacts to the environmental and cultural integrity of its homelands and its people. As an alternative it has chosen a developmental direction of a land-based sustainable renewable energy resource development, with primary focus on solar, wind and bio-mass to energy conversion resources.

G. The Northern Cheyenne Response to Off-Reservation Coal Development.

Beginning in the 1970s, a consortium consisting of Montana Power Company and several major Washington and Oregon utilities, launched a plan to build two 750 MW coal-fired powerplants at Colstrip. The Tribe became concerned that, because of prevailing wind patterns, air pollution from these massive plants would pollute the Reservation airshed. Under prevailing legal standards, the powerplant was not obliged to minimize such pollution.²

In an unprecedented move, the Northern Cheyenne Tribe took action which

² The discussion in this section is adapted from S. Chestnut, The Fighting Cheyenne (2000).

changed the legal standard. The Tribe decided to become the first unit of government in the Nation – Federal, state, local or tribal – to voluntarily raise the air quality standard within its territory to the most pristine standard under law. Specifically, the Tribal Council moved to raise the Reservation air quality standard to the highest permitted by law – Class I – a standard which theretofore applied only to National Parks and Wilderness Areas. This Class I re-designation was legally challenged by the Colstrip utilities and others. These challenges were rejected by the United States Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

This strategy enabled the Tribe to force the Colstrip utilities to negotiate with the Tribe on a variety of issues. That negotiation was successful – the most stringent air pollution control technology was installed, a company-funded program for Tribal monitoring of Reservation air quality was established, a major employment preference program for Tribal members was established at the powerplants, a company-funded four-year college scholarship program for Tribal members was established, and modest financial assistance was provided by the companies.

In 1982, Secretary of the Interior James Watt held the largest Federal coal lease sale in the Nation's history. He offered for lease by public auction massive amounts of Federal coal in the Powder River Coal Region of Southeast Montana and North Central Wyoming. The tracts offered in Montana encircled the Northern Cheyenne Reservation to the north, east and south.

In a serious breach of his trust responsibilities, the Secretary formulated the sale in violation of his obligations under the Federal Minerals Leasing Act, the regulations controlling the Federal Coal Leasing Program, and the National Environmental Policy Act and its implementing regulations. Before the sale, the Tribe brought these concerns to the attention of the Secretary and to companies known to be interested in bidding at the sale. However, the Secretary and the companies disparaged and refused to address the Tribe's concerns.

The Tribe was therefore left with only one option – litigation. The Tribe commenced suit, seeking a declaratory judgment and injunction. It asked for a declaration that the Tribe's claims of breach of trust and statutory and regulatory violations were valid and for an order voiding all leases issued in the sale. This included leases which would support new mines in the Tongue River Valley, immediately east of the Reservation, and smaller leases which would merely extend existing mining operations at Colstrip and Decker.

The Tribe prevailed on all of its claims. Federal District Court Judge James Battin entered a declaratory judgment vindicating all Tribal claims and declaring all issued leases void. Perhaps the most enduring benefit of that decision was a declaration that, in fashioning Federal coal development in areas adjoining Indian reservations, the Secretary has special trust responsibilities to identify and mitigate adverse impacts on affected tribes.

In post-decision proceedings, Judge Battin permitted the Colstrip leases to be mined during the pendency of an appeal by the United States. However, the Tribe

appealed that post-decision adjustment and prevailed. On remand to Judge Battin for further proceedings, all leases for new production tracts were again terminated and a settlement was reached with Western Energy, the holder of the mine-extension leases at Colstrip.

In the settlement with Western Energy, the company agreed to a special program for enhancing employment opportunities for Tribal members in all Colstrip operations, an enhanced college scholarship program for Tribal members, and \$1,000,000 in impact funding to the Tribe. In addition, as prevailing party in the litigation, the Tribe sought and obtained a very substantial award of all attorneys fees and expert witness fees and costs incurred in the case. In recognition of the Tribe's success on the merits in the case, Judge Battin issued an award which fully covered all of the Tribe's fees and costs throughout the nine years of litigation at both the trial and appellate levels.

Among its principal purposes, the 1982 Powder River Coal Sale was intended to launch major new projects to mine Federal coal in the Tongue River Valley. As described above, this goal was not achieved because of Tribal legal intervention. At the same time, however, another major new coal mining project – the Montco Mine – was being planned in the Tongue River Valley on private and State coal.

The Montco Mine would lie across the Reservation's eastern boundary, the Tongue River. Because private and State coal were involved, the Federal role was minimal; the State of Montana was the major player. The regulatory key to the Montco Mine project was its mining permit, issued by the State and rubber-stamped by Federal authorities.

Because the Tribe's resources are limited and litigation is expensive, for a number of years, the Tribe did not actively oppose issuance of the Montco mining permit, while others (Northern Plains Resource Council and Native Action) sought to block issuance and renewals of the permit. Those efforts were unsuccessful.

In 1996, the Tribe joined the fray, focusing (jointly with Northern Plains Resource Council and Native Action) on a proposed extension of the Montco mining permit. Taking a lead role in administrative proceedings on the proposed extension, the Tribe, in cooperation with its allies, contended that the mining permit could not lawfully be extended under the applicable state permitting statute. These efforts persuaded the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation to deny the extension. Montco immediately brought suit in State District Court and prevailed.

The Tribe and its allies appealed to the Montana Supreme Court, with the Tribe again taking the lead role. In a case of first impression in the Nation, the Tribe and its allies prevailed. The Montana Supreme Court agreed completely with their position, holding that the Montco project could not lawfully obtain an extension of its mining permit and that the mining permit was therefore terminated. Montco has not applied for a new mining permit and its future is doubtful. If Montco should apply for a new mining permit in the future, before the State could act it would have to prepare an entirely new environmental impact statement addressing the concerns of the Northern Cheyenne.

H. Northern Cheyenne Culture Today.

The early reservation policies of the federal government were mistaken and disastrous. Among other failures, Indian cultures did not as a whole disappear, as policy makers presumed and planned, and tried their best to hasten. Some particular Indian cultures did perish, often through the actual demise of all or most of their members, but a great many more did not. Thus, by and large, Indian culture (as opposed to Euroamerican culture) did not in fact die out as policy makers presumed and planned. In particular, the following section on contemporary Northern Cheyenne culture makes the persistence of Native culture quite clear as regards the Northern Cheyenne and, as we just noted, it therefore remains central to any consideration of contemporary socio-economics on the Reservation.

Indian children ripped from their homes and put in boarding schools did not become "just like everyone else." Outlawing Indian religions did not destroy traditional belief and experience of the spiritual. The famous strategy of the well-meaning liberal reformers of US Indian policy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, summed up in the phrase, "kill the Indian, save the man," did not work because the "man" was the Indian and vice versa.

Culture went far "deeper" than the Euroamerican mind of that era could imagine. Further, the policies implemented to "kill the Indian" were in fact killing actual people, and subjecting those who survived to inhumane and intolerable conditions. As Joe Little Coyote explains in this concluding section, Northern Cheyenne culture although still dealing with the legacy of the past never-the-less remains vital today:

The Cheyenne people still have to contend with the exploitive institutional vestiges of a colonial system that is inherently discriminatory to them. The Cheyenne people are becoming fully aware that these paternalistic colonial relationships debase the humanity of both the colonized and the colonizer, and must be broken to clear the way in the rebuilding a self-sufficient independent nation. The vestiges of the Missionary schools continue to push a hidden assimilation agenda that prepares the Cheyenne youth to leave the reservation to go out into the mainstream American society. Although the Cheyenne really have nothing against this, they feel that their children ought to be also prepared to enter back into own tribal society. The vestiges of these continuing cultural genocidal practices serve only to hinder the self-determination of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe in meeting its own developmental needs.

The Northern Cheyenne people did not realize that the white man in taking over this country was driven by strange ideas of Manifest Destiny that were very destructive to all American Indian Tribes. For the Northern Cheyenne this has resulted in disequilibrium with their cosmological outlook based on these earth-lands. Given the opportunity, only they can put things back in balance by their own enlightened self-determined initiatives in their present on-going cultural adaptation processes.

The present impoverished conditions of the Northern Cheyenne can be likened to a defeated nation in a post-war development situation in attempting to rebuild a nation in the context of the American Economy, yet bringing the cultural stone strengths of their past with them into the present. Its culture is still intact and well-meaning people and their institutions don't need to keep trying to frustrate it and/or replace it with European cultural-based religious philosophies. They still live with the earth-lands that created their own cultural philosophies of who they are as a people indigenous to the North American Continent.

Although the educational institutions founded by the Christian Missionaries have been forced to be more humanistic in the education and handling of Cheyenne children, in more sophisticated and deceptive ways they continue to push an agenda that is in many ways antithetical to Cheyenne cultural beliefs. To the extent they've used the Cheyenne culture in the education of these children, it is done in such a way that continues to send a message to the Cheyenne children that the culture of the Cheyenne people is of no real significance. Consequently, many Cheyenne children do not know anything of real substance about their culture, history and contributions to America. They are made to feel like the Cheyenne people don't really count for anything of real importance.

As Joe Little Coyote further explains:

Today, even though many Cheyenne people have to some degree adopted the many different persuasions of the Christian faith, it is done in such a way that it is added to their own traditional beliefs, and not as a replacement of their own traditional sacred ways. Traditional Cheyenne people have always been open to almost any other belief if it is presented to them as being sacred and beneficial; the white missionaries never understood this. That is why Cheyenne people will pray with anyone willing to pray with them, regardless of religious persuasion. The only ones who have a problem with this are the representatives of the various Christian churches that apply man made doctrines requiring a complete replacement of Cheyenne beliefs.

Today, the Northern Cheyenne people still carry on their traditional sacred ways. Annually, they hold tribal-level renewal ceremonies. In addition, individual ceremonies of fasting (vision quests), piercing (rawhide-pulling ceremonies), and other ceremonies are held during the ceremonial season which starts around the time the Beaver Star Formation (Cygnus) appears in the southeastern direction in the early spring. They begin with purification ceremonies in which their medicine bundles and ceremonial instruments are purified through a sweat lodge ceremony. In response to individuals pledging to go through ceremonies, after accepting their requests for help, preparations are made by the societal institutions in deciding where and when such ceremonies are to be held.

Every effort is made to hold these ceremonies in secluded areas of the

reservation. The ceremonies are heavily dependent upon water sources: rivers, streams and springs. These water sources are used in a ceremonial way for washing off the sacred earth paints used in these ceremonies. Offerings of prayer cloths and tobacco are made at a number of these springs which are held to be sacred. They also use this water for their sweat lodge ceremonies, for cooking and other domestic uses during such ceremonies. Given off-Reservation restrictions, which encompass a number of their traditional use areas, some efforts are underway to secure rights to continue using such places for their ceremonies, e.g., Bear Butte and other State and Federal lands. The American Religious Freedom Act to some extent provides for this, but arrangements still need to be made with these jurisdictions in the development of policies acceptable to the Northern Cheyenne.

Although the ceremonies of the Northern Cheyenne people have to some extent adapted to the societal constructs of an ordered American society (e.g., holding ceremonies to take into account a person's employment schedules), the traditional substance and focus of their beliefs have not changed in maintaining their identity as the Cheyenne people. Ceremonial people have altered the times in which ceremonies are held so as to accommodate their need to make a livelihood in today's economy.

Today, many Cheyenne also continue to go to the traditional use areas and sacred sites on the United States Forest Service lands (e.g., the Custer National Forest just east of the reservation in the Tongue River Region) to hold some of their ceremonies. Although the Tribe and the Bureau of Indian Affairs maintain lists of these areas that are sacred to the Cheyenne, they are not to be distributed by anyone and are not to be made public, and may be divulged only on a need-to-know basis to authorities responsible for managing such areas. And, although some of the ceremonial people know of other areas lying on private lands off the reservation in the Otter Creek and Birney areas, they often refrain from going to these areas to hold their ceremonies because of the hostility of some of the landowners in these areas. The burial sites of the ancestors of the Cheyenne people that lived in these areas are considered part of their sacred belongings and should not be disturbed by anyone. If they are disturbed, there is recognition among the Cheyenne people that only qualified ceremonial people can appropriately provide for the required care and handling of these matters. The earth lodges, a number of which are in the area of Otter Creek, are very important sources for health and revelation.

The ceremonial, cultural and burial sites are considered sacred belongings of the Cheyenne people and are not to be disturbed by anyone, because they are part of an intimate relationship the Cheyenne have with Grandmother Earth, similar to the nurturing care relationship between a child and its mother. These burial sites contain the spiritual essences of the sacred life cycle of birth, death and rebirth, i.e., as provided in the

creation of life with a physical and spirit form from Grandmother earth and the breath of life of the Creator *Maheo*, their physical form returning back to the earth and their spirit journeying back from whence it came. There is the belief that to disturb these essences can have terrible consequences that circumvents the process of the cycle of life, and a person's spirit can wander about the earth not able to make it back from whence it came. In any event, it is not the civilized thing to do in going about disturbing the graves of anyone, Native American or otherwise.

Among the present life of the people in their homelands, the young people are discovering that the sacred ways of their ancestors have meaning and purpose for today's times and conditions. They are finding that these sacred ways are the source of their identity as a people, and that they also have healing value for restoring balance and harmony with their cultural based humanity. Presently, at the Chief Dull Knife College, Cheyenne language restoration programs are being undertaken. And, coupled with education that prepares the young to enter back into their own Tribal society, it is believed that this healing process will finally allow for the Cheyenne people to become all that they can be, individually and collectively, in today's times. The only obstacle that has to be overcome to clear the way to the development of a self-sustaining socio-economic livelihood is the conditioned dependency mentality. Around the early 1970s, after over the next ten years, the Sundance ceremony was revived and it has been held regularly ever since. At that time there were probably only about three people that had sweat lodges on the Reservation. Today, you will find at least forty families that have sweat lodges, and it is not unusual to find at least six sweat lodge ceremonies going on every evening of the week in the Reservation districts. Traditional prayer ceremonials are being held every weekend of the year. And, beginning with the ceremonial season in the early spring and lasting all summer long, many of the people and their families are going out into the hills, on and off the Reservation, to hold individual ceremonies. The culture of the Northern Cheyenne is still very much alive today and every effort is being made to sustain it far into the future.

In conclusion, although the Northern Cheyenne have aboriginal and allodial title to their ancestral homelands in the Tongue River region, they had to go through terrible sufferings of outright extermination and cultural genocide to regain their homelands and in addition, they paid for these homelands through off-sets from their land claim settlement in 1964. At present the land-based culture of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe is transitioning through an adaptation process to a new self-sufficient and independent livelihood that will maintain the environmental and cultural integrity of its Reservation homelands. This newly developing livelihood will be based on the sustainable renewable energy resources of its own lands. In these regards, this overview of the cultural history of the Northern Cheyenne people clearly shows that the continuing commercial encroachments of the white man, as proposed in its coal-bed methane development within the Tongue River region, will have a destructive impact to its homelands, cultural resources, and its newly developing livelihood. In regards to the proposed coal-bed methane development in the Tongue River region, the Environmental Impact Statement process assumes that a certain degree of degradation from such development is acceptable. The Northern Cheyenne Tribe finds these assumptions to be unacceptable.